THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:-

1. An apparatus for controlled rate dispensing of a liquid contained in a flexible bag, said apparatus including

a chamber adapted to contain the flexible bag containing the liquid;

an outlet from the chamber adapted to receive an outlet conduit communicating with the interior of the flexible bag;

a source of gas arranged to apply pressure to at least part of the exterior walls of the flexible bag; and

a pressure regulator arranged to maintain a predetermined substantially constant gas pressure applied to said exterior walls,

whereby the pressure applied to said exterior walls causes liquid to be dispensed from the flexible bag through the outlet conduit at a controlled and substantially constant rate.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein

the chamber is a substantially gas-tight chamber;

the outlet from the chamber is adapted to seal the outlet conduit to the chamber; and

the source of gas is arranged to supply gas under pressure to the interior of the chamber, thereby applying pressure to the exterior walls of the flexible bag.

3. The apparatus according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the pressure regulator is arranged to regulate flow of gas from the source of gas to the chamber.

4. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the source of gas is connected to an inflatable bladder such that, in use, the inflatable bladder is in contact with at least part of an exterior wall of the flexible bag.

5. The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein, in use, the inflatable bladder is in contact with an inside wall of the chamber.

6. The apparatus according to claim 4 or 5, wherein inflation of the inflatable bladder by the source of gas applies pressure to an exterior wall of the flexible bag.

7. The apparatus according to any one of claims 4 to 6, wherein the inflatable bladder comprises an inflatable sock adapted to wrap around at least part of the flexible bag.

8. The apparatus according to any one of claims 4 to 7, wherein the pressure regulator is arranged to regulate flow of gas from the source of gas to the inflatable bladder.

9. The apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the source of gas comprises a pressure vessel of pre-compressed gas.

10. The apparatus according to any one of the claims 1 to 8, wherein the source of gas comprises a reservoir pressurised by a pump.

11. The apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the flexible bag is a medical supply bag of the type used to supply intravenous drip fluids for patients.

12. The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the flexible bag comprises a so-called Baxter bag.

13. The apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the apparatus is arranged to dispense liquids at a controlled low flow rate.

14. The apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the chamber is provided in a relatively flat cuboidal configuration have a depth significantly less than the length or width of the chamber.

15. The apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the pressure vessel and gas regulator are located alongside the chamber in a common housing arranged such that the pressure vessel and gas regulator are contained within the depth of the housing.

16. The apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the housing is provided with a support strap adapting the housing to worn by a patient.

17. A method of delivering liquid from a flexible bag at controlled rate, said method including the steps of providing an apparatus as defined in any one of the preceding

claims, setting the pressure regulator to a predetermined pressure, and applying pressure to at least part of the exterior walls of the flexible bag.

18. The method according to claim 17, wherein the liquid is delivered at a substantially constant flow rate.